

**REVERSING THE
EXPLOITATION
OF AMAZONIAN
INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES:
DRUG TRAFFICKING AND
EXTRACTIVE ECONOMIES
IN PERU**



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Foreword

We are now at a crucial juncture as a global society. Having reaped the benefits of access to other countries' resources, we are witnessing the profound ill effects of our often careless endeavours. Lands and peoples have been displaced, ecologies of life have been destroyed, and we are only beginning to recognise that what we are destroying is essential for the continued survival of our species. This I mean both in terms of the health of our planet, to which the Amazon greatly contributes, but also the ancient knowledge contained in its many Indigenous cultures. It is such knowledge which has begun to save us from ourselves, by inviting us to reconnect with nature and step away from the precipice of our modern culture.

Beyond the recognition of their profound value to human civilisation is the simple fact of their inalienable human rights as self-determining peoples, which are at present being wilfully ignored in order to continue the exploitation of their lands.

To solve this problem requires an understanding of the dynamics at play, and this is precisely what we aim to provide with this report, which was commissioned by the Beckley Foundation and written by Peruvian lawyer, R. Soberón Garrido, director of the Research Center on Drugs and Human Rights and past president of the National Commission for the Development of a Life without Drugs, (DEVIDA).

It is incumbent both on the government of Peru and its international community to grapple with these factors and consider their implications, so that the damage done to the Amazon and its peoples can be stopped and hopefully reversed.

- Amanda Feilding
Founder and Director
The Beckley Foundation

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Introduction

The following paper has two main objectives. First and foremost, to shine a light on the extremely vulnerable situation Amazonian Indigenous peoples of Peru currently face, with the aim to specifically highlight this to the international community of the country. Industries such as drug trafficking, logging and gold mining are amongst the largest extractive economies in the world, and place increasing pressure on these Indigenous peoples.

Coca colonisation on the ancestral territories of 18 of the 51 recognised Indigenous peoples of Peru can be evidently seen from the uncontrollable growth of coca crops, laboratories and airstrips, as well as the economic and demographic pressure which has been pushed onto these communities. This has caused redistribution of land and forest ownership within all regions of the Amazon basin, resulting in territorial dispossession and loss of biodiversity². As a result, the 51 Amazonian Indigenous peoples of Peru have been deprived of their fundamental rights and freedom, whilst the Amazon itself has been irreversibly devastated.

Although Central America³, Mexico⁴, Colombia⁵ and Bolivia also experience this, the state of affairs in Peru is particularly concerning due to the total lack of consideration towards the Indigenous populations by the government, despite any assumed international agreements. The recent Declaration of Belem, from 9th August 2023, states:

47. Guarantee the rights of Indigenous peoples, local and traditional communities, including the right to territories and land inhabited by these peoples. Full and effective possession and titling of their territories and lands in line with the various national regulatory frameworks, as well as the development of Indigenous territorial and environmental management policies, as an indispensable condition for the conservation of biodiversity. Ancestral knowledge and conservation practices must be considered.

In the case of Peru, there appears to be a relentless effort to disregard such commitments.

The second objective of this paper is to put forward a clear and concrete proposal on what actions an Amazonian State, such as Peru, can take to restore harmful actions. Supported by the UN/OAS agencies, ACTO⁶ and the international community, the aim is to outline a methodology to help close social gaps caused by a historical lack of commitment in the design of public policies, whilst positively impacting territory, natural resources and the collective rights of the Amazonian Indigenous peoples.

As this paper will demonstrate, woven into the fabric of illicit extractive economies, drug trafficking and Indigenous communities are institutional dilemmas. Disproportionate encounters between ancestral culture, savage capitalism, global demand for goods, services and environmental urgencies, which are not taken into account.

51 Amazonian Indigenous Peoples of Peru have to face growing pressure of the largest illegal extractive economies in the world, drug trafficking, logging and gold mining.

The Amazon: Land of Extractivism

The aggressive expansion of drug trafficking and other illicit extractive economies is the main source of deforestation in the region.

Occupation of the Amazon has been slowly developing since 10,000 BC (Meggers, 1985), or, as shown by the definitive evidence of the Madeira river, since 5,400 BC (Myers, 1988). Before the European arrival in the 15th century, Amazonians were the object of confrontation with the Andean world, including the various attempts by the Incas of Cusco to invade the Antisuyo. The Amazon has been home to cultures long before foreign arrival, with 2000 villages and 7 million inhabitants at the time of the conquest of the Kingdoms of Spain and Portugal. But from early on, the land has been subject to conflict between civilisations. The outcome of the confrontation between the native and Western societies represented by Spain, Portugal, England, France, and later by the USA, gave rise to a long colonial period in the midst of the European conflict, to appropriate the various natural resources, shaping the successive extractivist “booms” since the 18th and 19th centuries.

Since the 17th century, the South American Amazon has been subject to aggression from large, in-demand industrial economies to provide a diverse range of resources. Such resources include quinine, timber, rubber, barbasco, gold, oil and, of course, coca and cocaine⁷. Greed for these goods invariably traces back to the same motivation of supplying the demand of developed western societies. Whilst the rubber tapping genocide may be recognised as one of the darkest chapters of this decimation of Indigenous peoples of the Amazon⁸, the oil cycle that began in the 1970s in Loreto was similarly catastrophic from an environmental and cultural perspective. Something equally troubling is taking place in South American Amazonian territories.

In addition to their international illegality, coca and cocaine production give rise to social, economic and cultural disparities. These trades drive invasion of the land belonging to the 51 Amazonian peoples and 2,703 native communities, from the Amazonian foothills with progressive expansions towards the Amazon plain (III Census of Native Communities. Final Results, INEI, 2017).

Between 1985 and 2018, about 724,000 km of forest was deforested in the Pan-Amazon.

This aggressive expansion of drug trafficking and other illicit extractive economies are the main source of deforestation in the region. According to De Rementería⁹, producing 1 kg of cocaine hydrochloride requires 2/4 kg of cocaine base paste. To produce 1 kg of base paste, 75/136 kg of coca are needed, and one hectare of land yields 1.14 tons of coca leaf per year.

As recently stated by the Scientific Panel on Amazonia: “ANT 18.1, it is estimated that between 1995 and 2017, more than 360,000 km of forest was devastated in the Amazon biome. Between 1985 and 2018, about 724,000 km of land was deforested in the Pan-Amazon”¹⁰.

Currently, no other legal agro-industrial process compares to this illicit global chain. From any perspective, the cultivation and processing of coca/cocaine goes beyond criminal or delinquent intentionality towards the jungle population.

Extreme Vulnerability of Indigenous Peoples

Approximately 800,000 citizens, distributed across 51 recognised groups, make up the Indigenous peoples of the Peruvian Amazon, according to the Ministry of Culture's database¹¹. Since their incorporation with the 1920 Constitution and the Land of Mountains Law, Amazonian populations have been fragmented into native communities, coexisting between a centralist state and a small population within a vast territory, with very limited political representation and significant social gaps.

In the 1990s, the Ashaninka and Non-Matsiguenga communities suffered consequences of the physical, collective and political aggression of Shining Path terrorism, particularly in the Selva Central, Tambo River and Ene River¹² regions.

Since the democratic transition of 2001, the Amazonian Indigenous peoples have been absent from political consideration. At present, they have no political representation in any branch of the government, except for an Ordinary Commission in Congress, whose rulings in favour of the Indigenous peoples are not usually discussed in the plenary. There is also a symbolic Working Group in the National Jury of Elections. Occasionally, Indigenous groups are represented by elected regional councillors and district mayors. Neither the current constitution of 1993¹³, the current legislation, nor the attempts of recent governments to promote foreign investment in the exploitation of raw materials, duly recognise the history, the present situation, nor the perspectives of the Indigenous peoples that ancestrally inhabited the territory, before the Spanish arrived in Peru in the XVI century.



Valley of the Apurímac, Ene and Mantaro rivers, also known as the VRAEM

The Indigenous communities inhabit over 782,880 square kilometres of mostly floodable plains, characterized by complex climatic and morphological interactions, as well as an abundant reserve of resources that give rise to impressive biodiversity. Furthermore, but their land is also an important source of oxygen for the planet. The fundamental problem lies in identifying the threat drug trafficking poses to Indigenous Peoples; most Amazonian native communities have a history of increasing dispossession and weak ownership of

The fundamental problem lies in identifying the threat drug trafficking poses to Indigenous Peoples.

the forest, subject to exploitation of hydrocarbons, gas, timber, gold and now coca and cocaine.

Although the majority of native communities are recognised, their territory is subject to fragile legal recognition and practically no protection from the rule of law against attacks from invaders, settlers or traffickers. The only formal response from the authorities has been to consider the location in which Indigenous populations inhabit, rather than concentrating in the communities themselves (according to the Ministry of Inclusion and Social Development), but it is simply not enough to acknowledge the territory alone being at risk.



Coca bush.

Journalistic references and complaints describe the problem of the presence of drug trafficking, but none raise awareness of the magnitude of the social, economic and cultural struggles born from global demand fuelling the narcotics trade.

The most palpable case, although not the only one, was the attempt by DEVIDA¹⁴, the governing body dealing with matters of drug control, to promote individual titling of the Amazonian forest (2014-2019) in an attempt to fix the population and promote alternative development outside of coca. Regional governments in Ucayali, Huanuco, have promoted individual titling of new settlers within communal property. Similarly, CORAH's¹⁵ efforts to promote the eradication of coca crops and individual titling has pushed coca growers deeper into the forest. Such actions have resulted in perverse activity which favour migration, deforestation and invasion of natural areas and communal lands in Ucayali, Loreto, San Martin and the jungles of Junin and Huanuco.

Drug Trafficking: From the High Jungle to the Lowlands

During the hegemony of Colombian cartels in the 1980s, coca crops derived from drug trafficking were confined to warm regions of the foothills or high jungle, between 500 and 1,200 meters above sea level, where “tingo maría” and “trujillense” coca is produced. This coca was produced for use in its own capacity, as well as obtaining parts for maceration and subsequent conversion into cocaine base paste and cocaine hydrochloride. Even so, the cartels did not attack the lower Amazonian territories in which the Indigenous peoples inhabited.

Between 1975 and 1996, the Cali and Medellín cartels of the Rodríguez Orejuela and Pablo Escobar families, respectively maintained management of the crystallisation process of coca paste from Colombia. The paste arrived from recently colonised areas in the high jungle of Peru, and to a lesser extent Bolivia, whilst agronomic control of the Upper and Middle Huallaga regions was maintained. A seamless illegal aerial transit was in place, from the high jungle of Peru to the regions where laboratories were installed, in Caquetá and Putumayo, Colombia. This occurred until 1991, which saw a dismantling of the Colombian drug trafficking air bridge in “Operation Breakthrough”, breaking up the aforementioned organisations in the resulting war unleashed by Colombia.

At that time, an average of 150,000 hectares of coca in the three Andean countries was sufficient to supply a nascent global market of no more than 10 million users of cocaine and its derivatives¹⁶. Today, there are over 250,000 hectares of coca in South America, despite annual attempts to eradicate the crops.

An average of 150,000 hectares of coca in the three Andean countries was sufficient to supply a nascent global market of no more than 10 million users of cocaine.

Table: Coca Cultivation Area versus Area

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Area under cultivation (ha)	40,300	43,900	49,900	54,134	54,655	61,777	80,681	95,008
Eradicated Area (ha)	35,868	30,151	25,784	18,000	25,526	6,272	5,774	21,600

Source: CORAH, DEVIDA, UNODC, depending on year¹⁷.

The arrival of the 21st century posed new challenges with the advent of the Mexican cartels that, until then, had only been responsible for drug trafficking into U.S. territory.

From 1995 onwards, they began to replace the Colombian groups thanks to an improved technique: better coca seeds, a greater number of plants per hectare, increased number of harvests per year, an improved crystallisation process and more efficient packaging

and transfer to the final market. This new approach did not require a larger cultivation area, rather it increased logistical capabilities and gave access to a rapidly growing market. This led to a new scene of illicit markets that, to date, has not been addressed by the UN, the US nor the European Union in their multilateral proposals and responses.

The international cocaine market has globalised dramatically. It is sustained, stable and does not suffer the consequences of the so-called “War on Drugs”, which has been carried out over the last 30 years. During this period, we have observed international implementation of all possible forms of interdiction to contain the **supply and demand of cocaine**.

The international community and countries have tried a range of methods to eradicate coca crops in attempts to **control supply**; manual, technical, compulsive, aerial, terrestrial, chemical fumigation and biological control being among the most notable. The only sustained achievement is that year after year, they have pushed the “cocalero” migration, coming from the Andes, deeper into the tropical forests. Today, Peru has 20 Amazonian micro basins that produce 95,008 hectares of coca crops (source: DEVIDA), with approximately 500 clandestine airstrips (source: Peruvian Air Force), many of which are located within the forests and collective property of Indigenous populations.

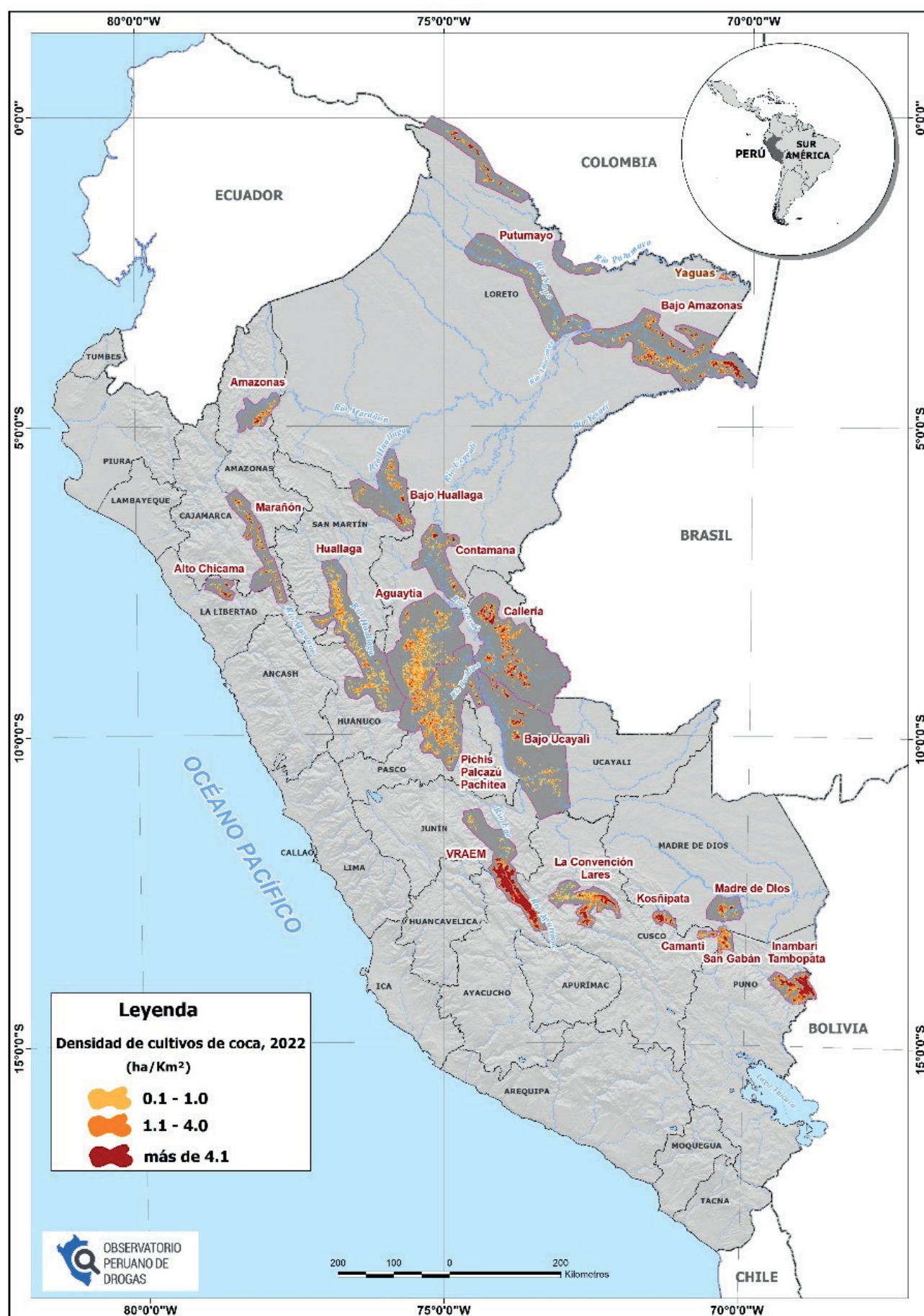
Such failed formulas have been accompanied by different models of rural development, termed Integral and Sustainable Alternative Development (DAIS) in Peru. 30 years on, none of the models promoted by international cooperation in the North have proved to be sustainable. Coffee and cocoa are dependent on international prices, and now other European environmental certifications, which will become a perverse incentive in increasing coffee and cocoa prices.

In no instance do DAIS products have the competitive advantages of price, transportation and availability that the illegal drug trafficking economy has, nor of the gold illegally extracted from rivers. Neither coffee, cocoa nor palm oil can compete with them.

Police control on the matter raises a more serious concern. The Amazonian presidents stated out in Belem:

61. Strengthen and expand police and intelligence cooperation for the prevention, repression and investigation of illegal activities. These include environmental crimes and violations of the rights of human rights defenders, the rights of Indigenous peoples and socio-environmental rights, affecting the Amazon region. Such activities may be surveyed through information exchange, intelligence, experiences, conduct of investigations and coordinated operations, and human resource training, among other actions. To be executed in accordance with the protection of biodiversity and the rights of

Coca crop distribution table 2022 (SISCOD, DEVIDA)



Indigenous peoples and local and traditional communities, with particular consideration of applicable international agreements. To promote, within the scope of ACTO, technical discussions among government representatives, with the objective of identifying priority areas for cooperation.

Police have tried all necessary and known techniques in attempts to dismantle this lucrative activity, but with little success. As generations of drug traffickers have succeeded one another, fixed cartel structures have transfigured into much more complex criminal networks. As a result, law enforcement becomes much more difficult. Similarly, global police forces have faced the enormous problem of corruption stemming from criminal enterprises¹⁸. The international financial system has been unable to prevent the various forms of money laundering, front companies and use of all existing trade integration mechanisms in favour of their illicit trade.

INTRINSIC COCAINE DISPARITIES

Criminal organisations have taken advantage of the intrinsic characteristics of the international cocaine market rooted in the Amazon. For example, in the Andean-Amazon region, around 2,000 tons of cocaine are produced annually. The world's police forces (Interpol, Europol, DEA, FBI, Scotland Yard, Andean countries' police) seize approximately 1,400 tons of cocaine per year, equating to around 70% of the world's production. The same cannot be said for gold, timber or any other controlled substance.

The illegal nature of the production and the characteristics of the final product (cocaine hydrochloride) mean that, from a business point of view of the traffickers, it is still very profitable for them to "work" with only 30% of the total quantity produced.

Why is this?

One kilo for \$1,100 in the VRAEM equates to a net sale of \$240,000 in Europe, for the same unit.

Firstly, due to the price chain that controls the illicit economy. Whilst the cost of 1 kg of cocaine at the farm gate reaches US\$1,100 in the VRAEM¹⁹, when this same unit arrives at the port of Callao, the intermediary pays US\$12,000. This is an increase of more than 1,000% to simply move it from the production zone to the maritime transport area. This explains why this coastal area has the highest homicide rate in the country. Furthermore, when the international trafficking operation is "crowned" at the port of destination (Hamburg, Rotterdam, Miami or Valencia), US\$40,000 is paid for that same kilo of cocaine before it is "cut" in three, turning it into 3 kilos with lower cocaine purity. One-gram units are then sold for US\$80 each.

In other words, someone in the final distribution chain receives approximately US\$240,000 for the sale of 3,000 units of cocaine sold in European or North American streets, bars and clubs: one kilo for US\$1,100 in the VRAEM equates to a net sale of US\$240,000 in Europe, for the same unit.

Indigenous Peoples and the Pressure of Drug Trafficking

Amazonian Indigenous peoples are in an extremely vulnerable position when it comes to having adequate health and services. The periodic income they receive in their insertion into the capitalist economic model also places them in peril. This is recognised by the main economic and social indicators in INEI (National Census 2017)²⁰, which establishes that only 13.4% of Amazonian Indigenous people have access to a public water network, and only 7.7% have sewage systems in place.

A consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic on the behaviour of illicit coca crops and cocaine production is that between 2020 and 2022, coca crops were temporarily abandoned in the VRAEM, prompting migration processes to the North and South of this mega-region. As a result, by 2023, new geographical routes will have been established: the Route to the North, which leads towards Ecuador and the Pacific coasts, and the Route to the South, leading towards Brazil and Argentina. This will move the cocaine produced in Peru to its intermediate destinations within Peruvian territory, and from thereon to the outside world.



Coca crops.

The Northern Route has three independent exits: one through the Amazon region to the Cordillera del Condor in Ecuador, and from there to the ports of the Ecuadorian coast (Guayaquil). Then another through the Amazon Trapezoid through the provinces of Putumayo and Mariscal Castilla (Loreto) respectively, on the triple border. The Lower Amazon region is a natural river corridor for cocaine coming from Colombia (departments of Nariño and Putumayo), as well as for cocaine produced in the Loreto region itself. Tikuna and Yagua Indigenous communities can be found in the provinces of Putumayo as well as the four districts of the Mariscal Castilla province, respectively, along the border strip that stems from the Peruvian

corridor.

The third road of the Northern Route is located more in the centre of the country, in Ucayali, and is perhaps the most urgent case to be considered for the protection of the Peruvian State. This route connects the production region of Padre Abad, through the provinces of Satipo (Tambo, Mazamari, and Pangoa districts in Junín) and Atalaya (Ucayali), bordering Brazil. These entrances are mainly used by trafficking organisations via river, land, and air, making Ucayali a strategic region and the central area for cocaine production. This district has suffered a dramatic increase in coca cultivation of almost 150%: from 3,822 hectares in 2020 to 10,151 hectares of coca 2021.

2021 saw 80 native communities threatened by illegal activities²¹. Threats have also increased as a result of an increase in clandestine airstrips; according to the Ucayali's²² Environmental Defenders Situation Report, there are 56 identified airstrips that are usually located in private properties, unregistered areas, production forests, buffer zones and/or in the territory of native communities. Reports from 2022 show this is a growing trend: approximately 22 new native communities and two Indigenous reserves are also reported to be affected by drug trafficking activity.

In total, at least 16 of the 51 ethnic groups recognised by the Ministry of Culture's database are affected by the advance of drug trafficking in its various forms

The second route is the Southern Route, which leaves the VRAEM and crosses the Cusco/Puno/Madre de Dios axis to the border with Brazil and Bolivia, respectively. Although it is essentially an air route, it covers the territorial space of communities settled in The Cusco Convention and the jungles of Puno and Madre de Dios.

The fundamental issue with this logistical distribution is that it has a primary impact on the territories of small, politically weak, socio-economically vulnerable Indigenous communities.

For example, 55,453 Ashaninka, 37,693 Awajún and 25,232 Shipibo Konibo people constitute the demographic nucleus of the Amazon: a small Indigenous population, which exists in an extensive territory to be defended.

In total, at least 16 of the 51 ethnic groups recognised in the Ministry of Culture's database are affected by the advance of drug trafficking in its various forms, including the problem of increased consumption of cocaine paste among indigenous youth²³: mainly *Huitotos, Yahuas, Tikuna, Secoyas, Awajún Wampis, Quichuas, Ashaninkas, Non Matsiguegngas, Kokamas, Kakintes, Amahuaca, Shipibo-Konibo, Ese Eja, Yiné*.

Peruvian State Policies

Since the 1990s, the Peruvian government has adopted various ideas from the National Plan for Drug Prevention and Control (1994–2000) to the current National Drug Control Policy.

Alternative Development programs and projects were established as a response from the Peruvian State and international cooperation to control drug trafficking and its impact on rural development. These programs were first implemented under the presence of USAID, then European cooperation, and now as a part of the General Budget of the Republic.

Their political design, operational implementation, and budgetary programming are directed towards peasant farmers, colonists, and migrant coca growers from the Andean zones. Neither conceptual nor operational references to Indigenous peoples were introduced until very late, and even then, the traditional Alternative Development projects did not foster an intercultural approach²⁴. While the social base of drug trafficking thus far has been the migrant settler and only very tangentially native Indigenous people²⁵, this may be changing as drug trafficking expands in the Lower Amazon. Such is the case with the Tocache Uchiza Project (PRODATU), implemented between 2002 and 2008 in a region where there are no native communities²⁶.

A large part of the Peruvian State's intervention with the Indigenous populations is based on the consideration that they are extremely poor. This limits their attention to the various social programs managed by the Ministry of Inclusion and Social Development (MIDIS) which, unfortunately, does not help generate lasting economic efforts, nor build upon any of the population's sustainability efforts.

Table: MIDIS Interventions to Amazon Indigenous Peoples²⁷

PIAS (river services provided by the Navy)	Tambos (multiservice platforms)	Qali Warma	Contigo (US\$ 78 subsidy every two months)	Pension 65 (grant of US\$ 65 every two months)	Together	Cuna Mas (care for children under 3 years of age)
48,569 interventions	319 in Amazonia	3,990 tons of school meals, 169,704 indigenous students, 3,990 tons of school meals, 169,704 indigenous students	Economic subsidy to 10,347 indigenous people with disabilities	57,319 indigenous senior citizens	2,370 interventions in Amazonian communities	14,196 children served

The vulnerable and small population, according to INEI in relative numbers, does not have sufficient political nor social representation to participate in public policy processes aimed at confronting a global economy, according to the Peruvian electoral system, such as that of international cocaine trafficking.

The anti-narcotics proposals that the governments of presidents Humala and Castillo tried to implement were counter-cyclical, contrary to the traditional policies of "first carrot, then stick". The "**Social Citizen Pact**" was one of the effective proposals promoted by DEVIDA during two administrations (2011 and 2021-2022). It proposed for coca growers and Indigenous people to leave the coca economy and the targeted, sustainable eradication of coca crops in protected natural areas and Indigenous territories. Unfortunately, these public policy attempts were not politically assumed by these administrations, nor by the political parties represented in Congress.



Remnants of a cocaine lab.

Table: Indigenous Organizations Affected by Drug Trafficking and Illicit Extractive Economies

Organization	Region	Population/Ethnicity
FECONAU (Federation of Native Communities of Ucayali)	Ucayali	Shipibo Conibo. invasions, crops, laboratories, airstrips
ORAU (Aidesepe Ucayali Regional Organization)	Ucayali	Shipibo konibo (CC. NN Flor de Ucayali)
OIRA (Organización Indígena Regional de Atalaya)	Ucayali	Shipibo Conibo, presence of crops, tracks and routes.
Regional Coordinator of the Indigenous Peoples of AIDSEPE Atalaya, CORPIAA	Ucayali	Shipibo Conibo, Atalaya province, mainly: tracks, crops and invasions.
FECONASHI (CCNN Ashaninkas of the Sheshea)	Ucayali	Ashaninkas, presence of airstrips (New Port of Sheshea)
FECONAPIA	Puerto Inca, Huanuco	
ACONAMAC (CCNN Association of Masisea and Callería)	Masisea and Callería, Tamaya River	Ashaninkas, affected by the presence of tracks (Cametsari Quipatsi)
FEDEPISAM	St. Maarten	Quichua, shawi
FENACOKA	Ucayali/Huánuco	Kakataibo, invasions due to cocallero migration (Unipacuyacu, Puerto Azul)
FECONAPU	Purús,Ucayali	Amahuaca.
OARA	VRAEM	Ashaninka and Machiguenga communities ²⁸ , affected by intense coca production, conversion of coca paste and extraction of the drug by air and land.
Autonomous Territorial Government of the Wampis Nation	Amazon	Awajún Wampis, presence of crops, tracks and drug transportation routes to Ecuador.
ARPI (Asociación Regional Selva Central, 2004), CART (1984) ²⁹ CARE (90s)	Junín, Satipo, districts of Mazamari, Río Tambo and Pangao, Ene river.	Ashaninka power plants ³⁰ non Matsigenkas, the largest indigenous population, between 50,000 and 100,000 people.
ODECOFROC	Amazon	Awajun Wampis, illegal mining invasions, drug trafficking, danger of routes to Ecuador
FENAMAD (Native Federation of Madre de Dios River and tributaries)	Mother of God	Installation of laboratories, use of routes to Bolivia
FECONAFROPU (Federación Comunidades Nativas Fronterizas del Putumayo) (Putumayo Native Border Communities Federation)	Loreto	Several ethnic groups
FECOTYBA (Federation of Tikuna and Yahuas Communities of the Lower Amazon)	Loreto (Mariscal Castilla)	9,000 Tikuna and 20,000 Yahua inhabitants. Invaded by coca crops, presence of irregular groups.
FECOTYBA (Federation of Tikuna and Yahuas Communities of the Lower Amazon).	Loreto	Tikunas and Yahuas. presence of coca crops (1,800), laboratories and presence of irregular groups.
ORKIWAN (Kichuaruna and Wangurina organization of the Upper Napo)	Loreto	Kichua population, drug cultivation and transportation;
FECOIBOP (Federation of Indigenous Communities of the Lower Putumayo)	Loreto	
FECONATIYA (Federation of Tikuna and Yahuas Native Communities)	Loreto	Tikuna and Yagua populations. Presence of crops and intense river traffic.
FECONAMAI (Maijuna)	Loreto	

A Proposal from the International Community, for the Peruvian State

We are aware of the critical situation Peruvian democracy is currently experiencing, particularly since 2016 and specifically after the events of December 2022 in the wake of the vacancy of Pedro Castillo, succession of Dina Boluarte and protests. Resolution of this deep institutional crisis is still pending.

Distrust and illegitimacy between society and political representations, including Congress, regional and local authorities, increased protest in the regions and thereby increased social trust in the State³¹.

The usual institutional response has been to resort to a state of emergency which can be extended ad infinitum, as has been the case for the last 30 years in the VRAEM. Another common response involves elaborating overblown strategies or plans which have not helped sustain rural development.

We must help the Peruvian State understand the Peruvian Indigenous peoples particular situation, particularly of those living in the Amazon.

Why have they not helped sustain rural development? Because they have not resolved the fundamental demands of the Indigenous population and their territory.

We must help the Peruvian State understand the Peruvian Indigenous peoples particular situation, particularly of those living in the Amazon.

What is the quickest way to achieve concrete results in the medium term that will improve the Indigenous peoples of the Peruvian Amazon's situation, stop deforestation and prevent biodiversity loss (an average of 200,000 hectares per year)?

Firstly, we must recognise the fragility of the rule of law in the Amazon. It has a scarce capacity for articulation and coordination of the State sectors, together with very poor governmental management. The most prevalent security, defence and border protection presence has been and continues to be that of the Armed Forces and the National Police, which both pose the threat of corruption.

Secondly, Peruvian society seems to be unaware of the role of Indigenous peoples, their knowledge, and their ancestral knowledge. In a recent private survey of national scope, 68% consider that Indigenous groups play an important role in the care of natural resources³². However, the State has a tendency to continue to reduce and control the expression and coexistence of these people, weakening the important role they play in the protection of the Amazon.

The clearest evidence of the Peruvian State's success can be seen in times when we have been able to act with clear objectives and good management. The clearest examples of this are the defeat of terrorism in the '90s, the organization of the 2019 Pan American Games, and some stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Therefore, we propose that the National Council of State be convened exclusively to address the situation of the Amazonian Indigenous population and their demands, with a very concrete proposal: the creation of a Multisectoral Task Force made up of qualified personnel from the PCM, the Judiciary/Public Ministry, MINCUL/MINAM to chair it, MININT/MINDEF, MIDAGRI and the Comptroller's Office/UIF, with six clear objectives:

I) Urgently proceed to a process of legislation and procedures agreed upon by the State (sectors and levels of government), for definitive **planning of how the land is to be used**, binding the Amazonian territory, which allows for the consolidation of the different rights, divisions, and categories of Amazonian land use, thus prioritising its conservation.

II) Stop any attempt to change territorial category (forest to agricultural zone, for example), prevent the increase of the agricultural frontier, as well as the granting or validation of possession certificates to individuals, when they are on land under communal dispute;

III) Combat in a sustained and strategic manner, through police, prosecutorial and judicial means, with the support of the Armed Forces and the participation of the alert system of Indigenous organisations, the expansion of illegal mining through the seizure and/or destruction of equipment, the targeted and sustainable eradication of coca crops and drug trafficking TID³³ (airstrips, laboratories), and stop timber trafficking.

IV) Proceed to a review of all types of licenses, permits or concessions for the use and exploitation of natural resources from the Amazon: their origin, operation, results, throughout the entire production chain.

V) Grant effective **legal security** over communal territories (through recognition, delimitation, boundary delimitation, titling and georeferencing) in the 631 communities that are still missing, in the four fronts that have been addressed in this article: the Cordillera del Cóndor, the Putumayo and Amazonian Trapeze bordering Colombia and Brazil, the Ucayali/Huanuco axis and the Puno/Madre de Dios axis, bordering Bolivia;

VI) Protect, in coordination with the Agriculture, Environment, Interior and Defence sectors, each of the units of the National System of Protected Natural Areas, in a binding manner, from coca growers, loggers and/or illegal miners.

We propose that the National Council of State be convened exclusively to address the situation of the Amazonian Indigenous population and their demands, with a very concrete proposal: the creation of a Multisectoral Task Force

Lima, November 2023.

Footnotes

- 1 Peruvian lawyer, specialist in Security, Drugs and Amazonia, director of the Research Center on Drugs and Human Rights, past president of the National Commission for the Development of a Life without Drugs, DEVIDA (2011 and 2021/2022).
- 2 CALDERON Segura July, "Despojo y Derechos Territoriales. Dinámicas de la Violencia en contra de los Pueblos Indígenas de Colombia", <https://doi.org/10.4000/ideas.10021>
- 3 <https://www.kas.de/es/web/ppi/veranstaltungsberichte/detail/-/content/gewalt-und-kriminalitaet-und-ihre-auswirkungen-auf-indigene-voelker-in-lateinamerika1>
- 4 <https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/politica/Crimen-organizado-hostiga-a-campesinos-e-indigenas-InSight-Crime-20220515-0071.html>
- 5 PERAFAN Carlos César, "Impacto de Cultivos Ilícitos en Pueblos Indígenas. The Case of Colombia. Good Practices Report", Washington, January 1999.
- 6 Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, created in February 1995, headquartered in Brasilia.
- 7 BARRANTES Roxana, GLAVE Manuel, "Amazonía Peruana y Desarrollo Económico", IEP, 2013.
- 8 COLLIER Richard, "Jaque al Barón. La Historia del Caucho en la Amazonía", CAAAP, 1981.
- 9 DE REMENTERIA Iban, "La Guerra de las Drogas. Cultivos Ilícitos y Desarrollo Alternativo" Editorial Planeta, June 2001.
- 10 Executive Summary of the Scientific Panel for the Amazon. Amazon Assessment Report 2021, p.41.
- 11 Database of Indigenous or Original Peoples, Ministry of Culture of Peru, <https://bdpi.cultura.gob.pe/> revised November 4, 2023
- 12 VILLASANTE CERVELLO Mariella, "La Violencia Senderista entre los Ashaninka de la Selva Central. Preliminary Data from a Political Anthropology Research on the Internal War in Peru (1980-2000)".
- 13 Article 2.19: "Every person has the right: To his ethnic and cultural identity. The State recognizes and protects the ethnic and cultural plurality of the Nation".
- 14 National Commission for the Development of a Life without Drugs
- 15 Special Project for the Control and Reduction of Coca Crops
- 16 DE REMENTERIA Ibán, "La Guerra de las Drogas y los Recursos Naturales", in Nueva Sociedad magazine number 174, July August 2001.
- 17 The reason for the existence of different sources regarding the measurement of coca cultivation is mainly due to the fact that until 2017 UNODC was responsible for publishing the monitoring of coca cultivation in the country, a responsibility that was later transferred to DEVIDA. In addition, the U.S. State Department has a different methodology for measuring the area of coca cultivation than the UN, which results in different figures.
- 18 <https://www.msn.com/es-pe/noticias/others/los-polic%C3%ADas-al-servicio-del-narcotr%C3%A1fico-que-desbarataban-la-lucha-contra-las-drogas/vi-AAIcJftI>
- 19 Is the acronym for Valle del Rio Apurimac Ene and Mantaro, a 300,000 square km region where most of the cocaine is produced
- 20 Peruvian National Census of Population, <https://censo2017.inei.gob.pe/>
- 21 <https://dar.org.pe/pueblos-indigenas-amenazados-por-avancede-carreteras-y-actividades-ilegales/>
- 22 Report on the Situation of Environmental Defenders of Ucayali, DAR, ORAU, Asociación Pro Purús. January 2022
- 23 <https://ojo-publico.com/4459/consumo-pasta-basica-avanza-menores-pueblos-amazonicos>
- 24 "Análisis de Medios de Vida y Desarrollo Alternativo", COPOLAD, mayo 2012
- 25 CABIESES Hugo (Ed), "Alternative Development and Rural Development. Debate on its Limits and Possibilities", IICA, August 1999.
- 26 Report 2002-2008, PRODATU DEVIDA, KFW.
- 27 <https://www.gob.pe/institucion/juntos/noticias/286933-ministra-donayre-los-programas-sociales-del-midis-trabajan-intensamente-por-la-inclusion-de-los-pueblos-indigenas>
- 28 <https://saludconlupa.com/noticias/ashaninkas-del-vraem-un-pueblo-amenazado-por-el-narcotrafico/>
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- 30 JANCOS Katalin (2022), "Violence and Economic Terrorism in the Lands of the Ashaninka People" in CESLA Journal, Vol. 30, pp 57-76. <https://iep.org.pe/noticias/critica-y-debate-el-ruido-del-silencio-y-la-complacencia-del-estado-la-desproteccion-de-lideres-ambientales-en-el-peru-por-danna-duffo/>
- 31 United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Observations on the Situation of Human Rights in the Context of the Protests in Peru", October 19, 2023.
- 32 Encuesta Nacional de Percepciones sobre Pluriculturalidad e Interculturalidad, Cooperación, Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos e IEP, 2023.
- 33 Acronym for Illicit Drug Trafficking

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Ricardo Soberón Garrido, "The Gold, the Wood and the Cocaine of Peru. Elements of Organized Crime around Extractive Activities", in Revista Que Hacer, Second period, July September 2022, <http://revistaquehacer.pe/n10>

Report of the Multiparty Commission in charge of investigating the Influence of Drug Trafficking on Political Parties, Regional and Local Movements", March 2016 Narcotráfico y Política, Libro.pdf

Ricardo Soberón Garrido, "Peru: Impact of Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Public Policies on Security", in Regional Security in Latin America and the Caribbean, Yearbook 2015, pp.273.

<https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/la-seguridad/07600/2015.pdf>

Beckley Foundation

The [Beckley Foundation](#) is a charitable organisation, set up by Amanda Feilding in 1998, to initiate and carry out pioneering research into the underlying mechanisms and the therapeutic potential of psychedelics, creating a scientific base for global drug policy reform.

Over the last 25 years, the Foundation has convened eleven influential international drug policy seminars at the House of Lords, which have been highly influential in changing attitudes among thinkers and policy-makers worldwide. Working both within the UK and internationally, Beckley has produced over 40 academic Reports, Proceeding Documents and Briefing Papers on key policy questions. In 2006, Amanda created the Global Cannabis Commission, which produced the book [Cannabis Policy: Moving Beyond Stalemate](#), co-published with OUP. 2010 saw Amanda's launch of [The Global Initiative for Drug Policy Reform](#) and in 2011, she wrote an influential Public Letter calling for drug policy reform, which was signed by Presidents, Nobel laureates, and many other notables. Amanda's report [Paths for Reform](#) campaigned for alternative drug policies in Guatemala and was presented at the 43rd General Assembly of the OAS.

The Beckley Foundation's Drug Policy Programme was set up to develop a scientifically-evaluated evidence base with regard to the efficacy and repercussions of current drug policy regimes, and to promote informed and objective debate on the direction of future drug policy reforms. The Foundation works with leading academics, researchers and policymakers to cast light on drug policy options that minimise drug-related harms and respect individual rights.

The Amazonian Indigenous peoples and cultures of Peru are facing a dire threat to their continued existence, the extent to which the international community remains ignorant. Attempts to stymie the extractive economies of the Amazon have failed, and campaigns like the 'War on Drugs' have seriously precipitated the exploitation of indigenous peoples and land. In light of this situation, the present report explores the political and illicit market dynamics which contribute to these extractive economies in Peru. Based on this analysis, the author proposes a new task force to urgently introduce new legislation and processes aimed to reverse the harm and ensure the sustained health of the Amazon and its peoples.



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